



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

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**TRAVIS HARRIS PLEADS GUILTY TO DAMAGING
THE MONAHANS MUNICIPAL BUILDING USING A MOLOTOV COCKTAIL**

(PECOS, TEXAS) United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that 22-year-old **TRAVIS JAMES HARRIS** of Monahans, Texas, pled guilty to felony charges relating to the fire that damaged the Monahans Municipal Building on June 3rd, 2002.

Appearing before United States Magistrate Judge Durwood Edwards, Harris pled guilty to one count of *Damaging a Building by Fire and Explosive Materials* and one count of *Use of a Destructive Device During An Arson*. Harris faces up to 20 years in federal prison for the first count and a term of not less than ten years for the *Use of a Destructive Device* count, which must be imposed consecutively to the first sentence. Sentencing has not been scheduled.

Harris admitted that in the early morning hours of June 3, 2002, he assembled a Molotov cocktail using a glass bottle, gasoline, and cloth at a location near the municipal building in Monahans, lit the cloth, then threw the ignited bottle into a window of the Police Department. During their subsequent investigation, law enforcement officers and agents recovered Harris' fingerprint on a container in a lot near the crime scene. At the time, the container still contained a small amount of gasoline. Also, forensic testing conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives laboratory in Maryland revealed that hairs taken from Harris' right hand and forearm shortly after the fire appeared burnt. Additionally, while being booked into jail in Odessa, Texas, on June 4, 2002, Harris admitted to "blowing up" the Monahans Police Department. He also made the same statements to an inmate while incarcerated.

A substantial portion of the municipal building was damaged before the Monahans Fire Department put out the fire.

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton commended the investigative efforts of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Texas State Fire Marshal's Office, the Texas Rangers, and the Department of Public Safety together with the Monahans Police Department, the Ward County Sheriff's Office, the Monahans Fire Department and the Pecos Police Department in bringing Harris to justice. Assistant United States Attorney Jeff Parras is prosecuting this case on behalf of the government.

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